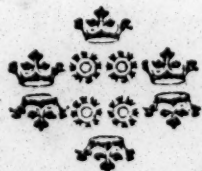


PLAIN ^{10th Ed.}
REASONS
FOR BEING A
PROTESTANT:

A SEQUEL to
Plain Reasons for being a Christian.

— Come out of her, my people — Rev. xviii. 4. —



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PLAIN REASONS
FOR BEING A
PROTESTANT.

WE speak improperly, when we say, the *Protestant Religion*, for that sounds as if Protestants had a religion by themselves, and different from other Christians. 'Tis more proper to say, the *Religion of Protestants*, for that means only *simple Christianity*, as it lies in the writings of the *New Testament*, and is common to all Christians, only purged from the errors and corruptions which the Church of *Rome* had gradually introduced and mingled with it, and which several princes and states agreed together to *protest* against at the time of the *Reformation*.

I was born and bred in a *Protestant* country and *Protestant* Church, and after reading some of the most considerable books on both sides, and much enquiry and consideration, have seen no reason to change the *Protestant* profession, or be reconciled to the Church of *Rome*. I owe it to the satisfaction of my own mind, and the enquiries of others, to be able to give a *reason* of my faith, or why I am a *Protestant*, and not a *Papist*.

The distinguishing principles of a Protestant lie in these things ; In the *sovereignty* of Christ alone in the Christian Church, as he is the *head of his body the church*, and king in his own kingdom, without any rival or substitute. He only has a right to prescribe laws to his subjects, the appointments of worship and duty, the terms of communion with one another, and of acceptance with God. There is no other proper *head* of the church; for *one is our master, even Christ*.

In the *perfection* of the scriptures as a rule of faith and duty, which were *given by inspiration of God*, confirmed by unquestionable miracles, and are able to make the *man of God perfect*, and to make us *wise to salvation*. This is the only standard of doctrines to be believed, and of Christian worship and manners. This is agreeable to the original *protest*, and to the *confessions* of faith of all the Protestant churches.

In the *right* of private judgment, or duty of every man to judge for himself, upon the best light he can get, and in the use of the means within his power. His religion must be his own, and the effect of judgment and choice, not of education or constraint : For he is the proper judge of his own actions, as he must give his own account at last, and not another for him.

In an open *profession* of his sentiments, and practising according to them. He thinks himself obliged to own the convictions of his mind, in things of importance, upon proper occasions, and to act in consistency with them, where he may differ from others, tho' with modesty and deference, especially to those in authority ; and never to make a profession contrary to them, or inconsistent with them, upon any consideration
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whatsoever. And as he claims this right to himself, he readily yields it to *others*, and never pretends to any other method of conviction, but by light and evidence, and by satisfying the reason and understanding of men. He detests the unchristian arts of violence and reproach, never practised or warranted by *Christ* or the *Apostles*, and contrary to the *genius* of the Gospel, either in himself or in any others.

This is the religion of Protestants, and so far I reckon, I have the same reasons for being a *Protestant*, which I have for being a *Christian*.

I shall now represent the just prejudices and exceptions I have against *Papery*; and the unjust and insufficient exceptions of the *Papists* against the *Protestants*. Of the former I shall assign the following principal instances.

I.

THE *Authority and Infallibility of the Church*. Tho' this is not expressly *defined* by any general Council, and spoken of very loosely by their doctors: yet 'tis strongly insisted upon, and made the foundation of their whole structure. I understand them to mean by it, "An ability so to decree and to decide in all cases of faith and manners, as that they cannot possibly err or mistake in any thing about them; and that all Christians are obliged to submit to them as necessary to their salvation." Now that this claim is arrogant and groundless, is plain to me from the following reasons.

Because, in the first place, that church itself is far from being agreed where or in whom it is lodged. The having this privilege is not a whit of more importance, than the knowing who has it;

nor can it possibly be of any use 'till 'tis determined and known who is in possession of it. If God had appointed such an infallible teacher and judge, I conclude he has taken care to make it conspicuously known, and that at least there are means sufficiently plain and certain by which to distinguish him from any other; and yet 'tis as certain in fact that they differ in their opinions where it is lodged, as that they do at all lay claim to it. Nothing can be more absurd, or as Archbishop *Tillotson* expresses it *, “ nothing could have fallen out more unluckily, than that there should be such differences among them, about that which they pretend is the only means of ending all differences.”

Besides, every one of these different opinions is liable to unanswerable difficulties. If it is pretended that 'tis in the *Pope* only; then it must have been upon their own principles, in every one of the succession of them, from *St. Peter* down to the present *Pope*: And yet several ages past before ever the Christian Church owned, or the *Popes* themselves pretended to infallibility. It is as certain as history can make it, that many of them have erred, even in matters of faith, and pronouncing *ex cathedra*: That some of them have contradicted themselves, and reversed their own decrees; and many more, the decrees of their predecessors or competitors, when, which has frequently happened, there have been two or three of them at a time, equally claiming this privilege. Many of them are owned to have been as wicked and profligate wretches as ever were born: Can it be thought that God would lodge infallibility in such hands? Others of them have taught and patronized,

tronized, what the Church of *Rome* itself acknowledges to be *heresy*: Were they infallible when they did so? To add no more, both from the *manner* in which they have from many ages past been chosen, and from the *methods* they make use of in judging and determining about matters of faith, there arise the strongest presumptions, not only that they may err, but that they actually have been mistaken.

If it is said, that infallibility is lodg'd in general *Councils*: This too is attended with manifest absurdities and unsurmountable difficulties. For how can the meeting of any number, every one of them taken *singly*, acknowledg'd to be fallible, and liable to be misled by their interests, passions, and prejudice, make the *collective* body of them infallible? If 'tis said, that the Spirit of God does so preside among them, and influence and guide their minds and consultations, as that tho' they may every one singly be mistaken, yet that their decrees when thus united, are infallibly right and true: Besides that such a pretence is void of any foundation in the scripture; their methods of proceeding have almost always been so manifestly under the influence, either of temporal princes, with a view to promote their own secular interests; or of ambitious Popes, afraid of having their own power lessened; or of interested parties, or persons among themselves; that no unprejudiced by-stander can suppose them to have acted under the guidance of the Spirit of God. And if any few of them at any time have been disposed to act for the glory of God, and the benefit of the Christian Church, they have almost constantly been out-numbered, and born down by those who acted from other principles, and with different views. Nor can this be thought an invidious

dious representation, since 'tis confirmed by all the historical accounts we have of them.

Besides, if general Councils only have this privilege, what becomes of it when there is no *general* Council subsisting? Where was it before the Council of *Nice*, anno 325? Where has it been for about 180 years since the Council of *Trent*? Does the Christian Church never need it at other times? Can a general Council always be obtained, when the church needs it? If so, one cannot help wondering at the reluctance several Popes shewed to the calling that at *Trent*, when almost the whole Christian world thought it necessary. Or will it be said, that in these intervals of Councils, the decrees of the former ones are an infallible guide to the church? This is owning that there is no need of having always a living visible infallible judge to apply to; and if any other will serve the turn, surely one may suppose the inspired scriptures as fit for this purpose, as the written canons and decrees of general Councils.

Nor is the difficulty at all removed by saying, as some others in the Church of *Rome* do, that a Pope and a general Council *together* are infallible: *i. e.* When a general Council is called by the Pope, and he presides in it either by himself, or by his Legates, and confirms its decrees, then they are infallible. But why so? If both are fallible separately, how can their clubbing together make them infallible? The certain truth and authoritative obligatoriness of the decisions in this case can't be owing to the Council, for that is owned to be fallible. When the Council has past the decree, and done its part, it comes to the Pope to be confirmed; but can he who is acknowledged to be fallible, infallibly assure

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me that the Council has not erred in making this decree? It is manifestly impossible.

But it may be, as others of them seem to think, the matter will be mended by saying, " That neither the *Pope* nor *Council*, separately nor together, are infallible; but that when their canons and decrees are received and submitted to, by the *Catholick Church*, they then are infallibly true, and absolutely binding." If by the *Catholick Church* is meant, as if they speak to the purpose they ought to mean, the *whole* body of those throughout the world, who profess to believe the doctrines, and obey the precepts of Christ and his Apostles, it does not appear to me, nor do I think it can be proved, that all of them did ever receive and submit to the canons and decrees of any Popes, or general Councils. If by the *Catholick Church* they mean, as we know they do mean, their own church, which to say the best of it, is but a part, and that a very corrupt part too, of the *Catholick Church*; this is saying nothing more, than that part of the Christian world, who are willing to give up their own understandings and consciences to the conduct and keeping of fallible men, do by receiving and submitting to their canons and decrees, make or prove those things to be infallibly right and true, which either were not so, or could not be known to be so without it. But how unreasonable is this? Are not articles of faith, or canons relating to discipline or practice, true or false, right or wrong in themselves, antedecently to, and independently of, their being received or rejected? Can truth and falsehood, right or wrong, depend upon human determination, or our acquiescence in it, or submission to it? If all that is meant is, that the *Catholick Church* and every member

member of it, cannot err in matters absolutely necessary to salvation, I know no occasion there is to contradict or deny it; but then if this is admitted, it is not because we apprehend, that either any or all the members of the church together, are either themselves infallible, or can make that to be infallibly true, which was not so till they received it; but because we take our Saviour's promise, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church*, to be an assurance to us, that he will have a church in the world as long as the world itself lasts: And because they who err in any of those things which are *absolutely* necessary to salvation, do for that very reason cease to be members of that church. Upon the whole, since it does not appear, nor are they themselves agreed, in whom this infallibility or unerring authority is lodged; and since every competitor for it, can and does so effectually confute the claims of all the rest; I can't help concluding that they none of them have it.

Besides all this, I find the arguments and proofs which are alleged in *support* of this claim, appear to be weak and fallacious. As I find myself endowed with a faculty of judging, I can perceive no vertue in believing any thing to be true, or practising any thing as my duty, any farther than I am convinced by reason and proper evidence, that it is truth or duty. So I must ever think myself obliged to assert my right to exercise this faculty, unless it can be proved that God himself has forbidden it. I find both by history and experience, that the boldest pretenders to judge for other people, are not only liable to mistake, but the most likely wilfully to mislead. The world has been so grossly imposed upon by this sort of people, that common prudence requires me to be
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upon my guard. By reading the New Testament, I find that Christ and his Apostles used a method quite different from that of the Church of Rome. I find appeals made to mens reason and understanding about those very matters, which others are for determining by the way of authority. I meet with explications offered, proofs and illustrations brought to inform and convince the minds of men; and plain precepts to search, examine and judge for ourselves, with great commendations of those who did so.

As for their appeal to *scripture* for proof of their infallibility, which they at the same time absurdly pretend that I cannot know is scripture, but by their determination, nor judge of the meaning of it, but by their interpretation; the texts they produce are all foreign to the purpose, many of them relate to the church *in general*, as consisting of all Christians, and therefore serve as well to prove that all are infallible, as that the Pope, or any other man, or assembly of men, is so. Others of them represent the duty of the ministers of the Christian Church, and the ends for which their office was instituted, without designing at all to intimate that they would never neglect the duty, nor swerve from the design of their office; and yet without supposing this, the arguments drawn from hence are manifest fallacies. Or, lastly, others of them mean nothing more than recommending proper *respect* and regard to ministers, in the diligent and faithful execution of their office, without the least hint of infallibility or dominion over our faith. Nay, among the texts quoted in this controversy, some are alleged to prove that infallibility is seated in the Pope only; others in a general Council; others in the Church in general.

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Now these texts either prove nothing, or prove too much. If they prove any thing, they must prove some that the Pope, others that a general Council, others that the Church in general, is vested with this privilege; and each of them must be true, they being supposed to be confirmed by scripture. But this is a great deal more than the Church of *Rome* desires to see proved, or will admit to be true.

In the last place, I cannot admit of this claim; because before they can reasonably make, or I submit to it, they must necessarily allow me to examine and judge for myself in so many cases, and of so great importance, that I think I may full as well judge for myself by the scripture rule, what I am to believe and practise as a Christian. Nay, and I have no reason to think they would have infringed my right, or appropriated this authority to themselves, had not pride and ambition, secular views and worldly interest, prompted them to it. It is plain to a demonstration, that if they would prove such a claim from the scripture, to me or any man, not otherwise disposed to admit it, they must first allow me to judge what is scripture, and whether it is transmitted down to me pure and uncorrupted; then to enquire into the sense and meaning of it, whether they interpret it rightly, or stretch and pervert it. If it belongs to the true church, I must first know what a church is, and how to distinguish the true one from all others. I am as sure that they cannot be all infallibly in the right, as that contradictions cannot be true. And though I know of but one church which directly claims this privilege, yet if even among them there are several competitors for it, who, tho' they can't all of them be in the right, yet may all of them

them be in the wrong, and the more likely to be so for their pride and insolence; I must be allowed to judge of their several pretensions, before I know to whom I am to submit, unless, at the same time they pretend to prove the justice of their claim, I am obliged to submit to it before I can see the force of the proof. And when I am got thus far by judging for myself, I think infallibility would come too late, and could signify little or nothing.

II.

The Supremacy of the Pope. It was decreed in the Council of *Lateran*, "That the Bishop of *Rome* held the supremacy over the universal church, as successor of *St. Peter*, the prince of the Apostles; and is the vicar of Christ, and head of the church, and has all power committed to him, to feed and govern the *Catholic Church* under Christ." And accordingly all Bishops and Converts are obliged to swear, "to be faithful and obedient to *St. Peter*, and our Lord the Pope, and to receive and execute all his commands; and to acknowledge the Church of *Rome* to be mother and mistress of all churches, and to promise obedience to the Bishop of *Rome*."

Now 'tis a sufficient prejudice against this, that there is an absolute *silence* about it in the Scriptures and in primitive antiquity. There is no express appointment, or any tolerable pretence for it in all the Scripture. *St. Peter's* being the rock upon which Christ would build his church, must either relate to the *Confession of his Faith* which he had just been making, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*, i. e. the promised Messiah, which was the distinguishing article of the

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Christian dispensation ; and so it was understood by *Crysoftom*, *Theodoret*, and *Austin* : or, to his publick ministry, in first preaching the Gospel to the *Jews* and *Gentiles* ; which was either personal to himself, and could belong to no other, or was common to him with all the other Apostles, who had the same commission given to them to preach the gospel to all nations. The keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the power of binding and loosing, i. e. of opening the way into the Christian state, and declaring the will of Christ to the world, was given to all the Apostles, as well as to *Peter*, *Matt.* xviii. 18. *John* xx. 23. So the command to strengthen his brethren after his fall, and to feed his sheep, was nothing peculiar to *Peter*, but common to all the Apostles, and to all the ministers of Christ too. This spiritual house is built upon the foundation, not of *Peter*, but of the Prophets and Apostles, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*, *Eph.* ii. 20. And other foundation can no man lay, than which is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*, *1 Cor.* iii. 11. 'Tis the least likely of any thing in the world, that *Peter*, who was more frequently reprov'd by Christ than any of the rest, and denied his Lord in the most shameful manner, when the other Apostles only forsook him ; should presently be set at the head of them all, and made the sovereign of the Christian church : One would much rather suppose it should have been *St. John*, who was always peculiarly favoured, and was the disciple whom *Jesus* loved.

But there are unanswerable reasons against it. 'Tis strange beyond all imagination, that when the Apostle particularly reckons up the several officers in the Christian church, *Eph.* iv. 8. *1 Cor.* xii. 28. that the first and principal one, if there
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was any such, should be always omitted. Nay there are plain and direct intimations in the scripture to the contrary. Our Lord forbid the affectation of of superiority among them; *The kings of the earth exercise lordship over their subjects; but ye shall not be so: but he who is greater, let him be as the younger; and he who is chief, as he who serveth*, Luke xxii. 24. He checks the ambition of *James and John*, when they affected prehemience above the rest, and desired to *set the one on his right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom*, Mark x. 37. When they disputed this very point among themselves, *who should be the greatest*: He tells them, *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all*, Mark ix. 35. He tells them at another time, *One is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren*, Matt. xxiii. 8. i. e. equal to one another *.

Nor did any thing of this appear among the Apostles afterwards. There was never any appeal made to *Peter*, in any matter of difference which arose, which had been the ready and shortest end of controversy. When dissensions arose concerning the necessity of circumcising the *Gentile* converts; *Paul and Barnabas* were sent, not to *Peter*, but to the *Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem*, Acts xv. 23. and they determined the matter, after a full debate, and sent their answer by *Paul and Barnabas*, in the following form; *The Apostles, and Elders, and brethren send greeting*. Nor did the Apostle *Peter* ever pretend to any superiority over his brethren, or speak in the stile of a superior; but only of a *fellow elder*, 1 Pet. v. 1. Yea,

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* This is the language of antiquity, *Pari consortis præditi & honoris & potestatis*, Cyp. ἰσότητι αὐτῶ comparing St. *Paul* and St. *Peter*, *Cryst.*

the Apostle *Paul* who was not *behind the chief of the Apostles*, withstood *Peter* to the face, because he was to be blamed, Gal. ii. 11.

'Tis not certain that *Peter* ever resided at *Rome*, much less was the Bishop of it. We never read of his being there, tho' we do of his being at *Jerusalem*, at *Antioch*, at *Babylon*, and *Corinth*. St. *Paul* never makes mention of him in his epistle to the Church of *Rome*; nor in the several epistles which he wrote to the Christian churches when he was at *Rome*, as to the *Galatians*, the *Ephesians*, the *Philippians*, the *Colossians*, the second to *Timothy*. Nor was it consistent with the character of an Apostle to be the Bishop of any particular city; for the one required him to preach the gospel to all nations, the other to reside and take care of a particular flock.

But however it was with St. *Peter*, there is no mention made of his *successor*; nor would it be possible to make out the succession down to the present time, after so great uncertainty of the history of the first age about it; and the many schisms and divisions in the Church of *Rome* at different times, and for a long while together; sometimes when there was no *Pope* at all, sometimes several *Antipopes* at the same time. Nor did any of the Bishops of *Rome* pretend to a supremacy for several ages together: but were upon a level with the Bishops of other great cities, even when the Christian world was divided into *Patriarchates*; as *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, *Constantinople*, and *Rome*. It was gradually introduced, and came at length to be settled in the darkest ages of the Christian Church, against a great deal of contention and opposition, and by the advantage of the weakness and

and divisions of the *Roman* empire, in the ninth and tenth century.

To conclude this head : The thing itself is utterly *impracticable*. There is a natural impossibility for any one man to have the care and government of the Christian Church, in all parts of the world, as it is for any one man to be the *civil* sovereign of the world. There could be no correspondence or transactions, either by himself, or by others in his name, perhaps within the age of one man's life, especially of aged persons ; as in cases of appeal, and decision of controversies, &c.

So great a weight laid upon so slender a ground, and against so many strong reasons, made so candid and modest a man as Archbishop *Tillotson*, pass this severe censure upon it : “ This point of
“ the *Pope's Supremacy* *, upon which *Bellarmino*
“ hath the confidence to say, the whole of christianity depends, is not only indefensible, but an
“ impudent cause as ever was undertaken by
“ learned pens.”

III.

Denying the right of private judgment. This naturally follows the two former; for if the church is infallible, and the Pope supreme head, I am not at liberty to judge for myself, but obliged to submit to the decrees of Councils, and the Bulls of the Pope. I must give up the right of judging for myself, and resign myself to the conduct of others, in what most of all concerns me. My faith and practice must not be according to what appears to me, but as others determine for me, tho' I don't perceive it to be right, yea tho' it appear to me to be wrong. Now against coming

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* Preface to Dr. *Barrow* of the *Pope's Supremacy*.

under such engagement I must protest, and my way of reasoning is as follows.

As I am a man I have a *capacity* of judging for myself in all that concerns my own welfare. Whatsoever alteration the apostacy has made in human nature for the worse, I am still a *reasonable creature*, and consequently a *free agent*, and therefore have a power to distinguish between good and evil, moral as well as natural; otherwise what I do, could neither be commendable or blameworthy, and so I could not be properly under a law, or accountable for my actions. If I am told, that I have not a power to judge in matters of *religion*; it cannot be meant, that I am not capable of judging whether I should be of any religion or none; or whether I should be a *Christian* or not; or whether I should be a *Papist* or no. For all the arguments used by *Moses* and the Prophets, by Christ and his Apostles, to persuade men to fear God, and believe in Christ, suppose my capacity of conviction. Yea all the reasonings of the *Papists*, by which they would persuade me to be of their church, proceed, if they signify any thing, upon that supposition; otherwise they might as well address themselves to brutes or mere machines. To reason with one who cannot judge what is true and right, is fooling, and a sort of *profaning* of reason.

If it is alleged, that I am capable of judging when the evidences for religion, christianity and popery, are set before me; but not of the particulars contained in the systems proposed: I ask, why not? If I am capable of being convinced by argument of the being, and perfection, and moral government of God, which are the foundation of natural religion; if I may be reasoned into the belief

lief of the reurrection of Christ, and the mission of the Apostles, which is at the bottom of christianity ; and if I may, it seems, be convinced by the force of argument, that the Church of *Rome* is infallible ; why may I not be reasoned into the belief of ever thing which is necessary for me to receive as true and fit ? If I am told, that the particular doctrines of christianity are beyond the reach of my capacity, and that I am not fit to judge concerning them, that is, whether they are to be believed or no : I answer, if I find them in the scripture, I have reason to believe them ; and whether they appear in the gospel, I must see with mine own eyes, and judge for myself ; being persuaded that every thing is true which Christ has revealed, tho' it may exceed my power to account for the mode and manner of it.

If 'tis urged, that I cannot *understand* the scripture without an infallible guide : I answer, I may understand as much of them as is necessary to my salvation, if I am a sincere enquirer, and use the proper helps afforded me ; and am not prevented from being so by sloth, precipitance, or regard to temporal interest ; or else to what purpose were they written ? If I should be told, that I cannot do this without the assistance of God's Spirit ; I answer, no more can an infallible guide. If I am told, that she only has the spirit to *lead her into all truth* ; I cannot admit of that, because I have the inspired writings as well as she, and promised the help of the Spirit, as well as she.

If I am hereupon charged with *vanity* and want of modesty in this pretence ; I ask, why ? Is it any want of modesty to depend upon a divine promise ; as, *If any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine, whether it is of God*, John
vii.

vii. 17. And, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given to him,* James i. 5. But is it not vain and impudent to set up your private judgment against the church: I hope, if my judgment is right, it is not. If I am told, that it cannot be supposed, that private men should be in the right against the determination of the church; I must ask, whether by the church they mean the *majority*? If not, I cannot imagine that numbers have any thing to do in the case: Are they the standard of right and wrong? If so, what had become of *Abraham* and the Patriarchs? How had it been with *Elijah*? If all the world were to poll, what would become of *Christianity*? Or of *Popery*, if free votes among Christians were to determine?

I must then at last be told, that 'tis an *essential* article of christianity, that every Christian must be determined by the decrees of the Church of *Rome*, the *mother* and *mistress* of all churches, whether she have the majority with her or no; which power would not have been intrusted with her, if private persons could judge for themselves. To which I only say at present, If this were in the New Testament, it would easily be found, as a thing of great consequence: But by the most diligent search I can make, it is not to be found; but in my judgment a great deal to the contrary. So that having no body else to judge for me, I must even do it myself as well as I can; for I suppose the Church of *Rome* will support no bodies claim but her own.

And as I have a *capacity* of judging for myself, it follows, I think, that I have a *right* to do it. If God who gave me the power, has not restrained
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the exercise of it, by any proper signification of his will ; I must reckon it a wrong done me, if any other attempt it. I have as much reason surely, to take it ill, that they will not let me determine myself by my understanding, as if they denied me the liberty of guiding my steps with my own eyes. It is taking upon them to invade my most valuable property ; and such ill usage as nothing can justify, at least without a divine warrant, which they have been often called upon to produce, but have not yet been able.

But I shall be told, whatsoever right I may have, I ought however to wave for the sake of *peace*. I think otherwise ; and my reason is, that I must take no indirect methods for any thing, how valuable soever it. I am not surely to *sell* truth for peace : Nor, indeed, is there any necessity for it. I may sure be in perfect charity with my neighbour, notwithstanding my judging for myself in matters of religion ; or difference in opinion from him. I am sure I shall love him never the less, for leaving me to my liberty, as I leave him. Yea, but they cannot love me so well, as if I submitted to their conduct. They ought I think to love me better, for acting a reasonable and honest part. Or if they cannot, I think 'tis their fault, not mine. It puts me in mind of *Joseph's* brethren, who *could not speak peaceably to him*, Gen. xxvii. 4. But then I should not give occasion to it by my *obstinacy* : That is to say, to prevent their unchristian malice and ill-will, I must part with a right, which I prefer to all the treasures of the world, and do really count unalienable. At this rate I must give up my estate, and every property to an unjust invader, that I may not give occasion for his robbing and plundering,
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or going to law with me. But how is the peace broken by my modest differing from my neighbour, and his letting me be quiet in my way? It will be said, But it would be better for people to be all of one way, and all of one church: True, if they could be all of one mind; but till this is done, the other is not to be hoped for. If the church's judging for me would really make me of her mind, there would be an end of the controversy; but pretending to believe what I do not, would be only falshood and hypocrisy, which would prove a hopeful foundation for the peace, to which so great a regard is pretended: I say pretended, because I cannot help thinking that peace is only the pretence, and power, with its consequences, the thing really meant. These modest successors of St. *Peter*, aim at what St. *Paul* expressly disclaims, *dominion over Christians faith*: And what I dare say, St. *Peter* never thought of, unless he dropt that expression incautiously, *Nat lording it over God's heritage*, 1 Pet. v. 3.

However I am indispensibly *obliged* to use the power which God has given me, if I were never so willing to wave my right, and part with my liberty; for Christ said, and not only to his disciples, but to the multitude, *Call no man father upon earth*, Matt. xxiii. 9. And besides this plain prohibition, and other passages in holy writ to the same purpose, which they who have a talent at wrangling may try to evade; this appears to me evident from the reason and nature of the thing. If I love my ease so well as to submit to other peoples decisions, rather than be at the pains of enquiring, or for fear or love of the world, should resign my judgment; I should *make myself a transgressor*. My reason, understanding, and judgment,

ment, are talents which God has entrusted me with for use and improvement, and the noblest powers of my nature ; if I hide them in a napkin, and run hoodwinked into prevailing opinions, I cannot answer it another day, when I shall be called to an account. I am persuaded that the condemnation of men hereafter, will be founded upon this, that they did not use the reason which God gave them ; but resigned it to their own and other mens lusts, and corrupt inclinations. For this reason I dare not neglect the gift which my Maker has given me ; nor, to speak as a Christian, *the unction which I have received from the Holy One*, 1 John ii. 20. *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*, a clear and glorious light set up in man for his information and direction ; and can I be innocent, if I put it under a bushel, or neglect to use it ?

And that God expects me to use my reason in matters of religion, is to me evident from revelation. God by his prophets pleads with the people, reasons and exhortates with them, appeals to their own conscience, refers things to their own impartial thoughts ; *Remember this, and shew yourselves men*, Isaiah xli. 8. when he would draw them off from idolatry. Our Lord said to the Jews, *Yea, and why even of your selves, judge ye not what is right*, Luke xii. 57. And elsewhere, *Believe me for the works sake*, as a proper reason and ground of faith. *Ought not the Christ to suffer these things*. St. Paul's epistles are full of close and strong reasoning which he premises to his exhortations. He first proves the facts as true, and the inference just, before he commands compliance : *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say*, 1 Cor. x. 15. And the Bereans are commended

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as of a more *noble* or generous spirit, because they *searched the scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so*, in the preaching of the Apostles themselves. This supposes that men should use their understanding, and not resign themselves to those who demand implicate faith and blind obedience.

That the Church of *Rome* does so is notorious ; and yet one would think that they are not so well satisfied with their own principles and conduct, by the books they are continually publishing and spreading in defence of their particular tenets. For to what end are they designed ? Do they really appeal to our reason in the point, for instance, in the doctrine of Transubstantiation ? Or is it not all a jest, when after all their reasoning, they will let it go for nothing, to assure them with never so much sincerity, that I am not, and cannot be convinced ? Whether I am or no, it seems I must believe as the church believes. If they can prove this, they may spare their arguments upon particular doctrines ; for they have me fast : If they cannot, I must not be a *Papist*, because they will not let me judge for myself, tho' I have not only a *capacity*, and *right* to do so, but am *bound* in duty to God to do it too.

IV.

Their *unwritten traditions*. The Council of *Trent* condemns the Protestant doctrine, “ That the necessary doctrines of Christian faith, are wholly contained in the Holy Scriptures ; ” and decrees, “ That traditions left to holy Church, and derived by continual succession of Christian Bishops, are to be received as of equal authority with the scriptures, and with the same pious veneration and affection.” Now *tradition*
is

is a word of great ambiguity by the abuse of it ; but of a plain sense and good meaning, when determined by the proper occasion of its use. A good Protestant is not startled or offended at it, when any thing is delivered us by what hand soever, which is worth receiving, and from whence any benefit can accrue. *Natural* reason is capable of great discoveries, and happy improvements, and they may be handed down to others, and turn to great account ; but they must be always subject to the examination of those to whom they are offered, or they can be of no use to them. *Supernatural* verities may be vouchsafed to some persons, to be published to others ; but even these must be tried, whether they are worthy of God, from whom they pretend to come ; and the credentials of the person who brings them must be produced and tried ; or else we should be liable to infinite deceit, and lie at the mercy of every bold pretence.

All revelation is tradition to those to whom it is sent. In this sense the Apostle speaks of the *traditions which they had received from him*, 2 Theff. ii. 6. And exhorts them to *hold the traditions they had been taught, whether by word, or by their epistle*, 2 Theff. ii. 15. They did not pretend to receive them from the Lord, without delivering them to the people : And who would refuse traditions delivered to them by the Apostles ? But if any person pretend traditions to draw men off from the worship of the true God, or to idolatrous worship, contrary to some sure revelation from God, we are bound to reject them, tho' a miracle were wrote to confirm them, *Deut. xiii.* For God may thus prove men, whether they love God, and adhere to his sure command and certain truth.

truth. Now if we are sure that God spake by holy men, and this both *Papists* and *Protestants* allow, in the writings of the Old and New Testament, we must adhere to this tradition, and examine all other traditions whatsoever, by this more sure word of God.

The *Jews* received the *lively oracles* of God, which declared his will, and *testified of Christ*; and therefore he commanded them to *search the scriptures*, and often appealed to the writings of *Moses*. And when they were corrupted by other traditions, a reformation of those corruptions was attempted and enjoined by Christ and his Apostles; and the truly divine traditions, like *Aaron's rod*, swallowed up the pretended traditions of the *Jewish Church*, by which they made void the commandments of God, and debased his pure worship. The *Papists* were not the first pretenders to *oral tradition*: The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* assumed the same to themselves, and went the same lengths. They made their traditions, that is, their own inventions, of equal authority with the scripture, and could and did say, with as much pride and zeal as any doctors of the Church of *Rome*, or Council of *Trent*: You have the oracles of God from us; you know the scripture by our testimony; you must understand them in the sense in which we explain them to you, or we will *put you out of the synagogue*, i. e. excommunicate and anathematise you. The *Papists* have copied after them too exactly: But the reformation detected the abuse, and brought us back to the original standard. Nor are we beholden to the Church of *Rome*, as the sole preserver and dispenser of the scriptures; but have these blessed records preserved by the wise and good providence of God, and by
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the universal tradition of the Christian Church : Not by the single credit of the Church of *Rome*, who had in its purest state only its share in this blessed tradition, and has preserved the Gospel of Christ, as the *Jews* did the Law and the Prophets, to their own condemnation, when grown corrupt and apostate. 'Tis a ridiculous pretence for any man to make, when once the sun arises and appears, that we are beholden to him for shewing it us, and that we must in gratitude see things in the light in which he is pleased to place them, and just as he shall describe them to us, and not by our own eyes.

And therefore the Holy Prophets obviated all corruptions by remitting them to *the law and the testimony*, and declaring, *If they spake not according to this rule, it was because there was no light in them*, *Isaiah vii. 20.* So *St. John* declares in the close of the canon of the New Testament, the reason of which at least extends to the whole, as well as to this particular book ; *I testify to everyman who beareth the words of the prophesy of this book, If any man add unto these things, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book : And if any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*

Rev. xxii. 18, 19. And accordingly we find with utmost certainty, that the true Bishops of the Christian Church, the antient apologists, and the ablest defenders of Christianity, in all ages, have resolved their faith into the holy scriptures, and disclaimed any other authority whatsoever.

We have great reason to be upon our guard, when a pretence to the custody of unwritten tra-

ditions, is made a means to set up a supreme power, which shall trample upon the rights and liberties of all mankind, both religious and civil; mutilate and alter the plain and express institution of Christ; impose the most absurd sense on plain and intelligible words; derogate from the merits of Christ, and introduce the worship of creatures, nay, of images, and pictures, and relicts of departed saints; appoint the worship of God, and the prayers of the church in an unknown tongue; dethrone kings, and shed the blood of multitudes, to set up an idol, which all tongues, and nations, and people, must bow down to and worship, upon pain of death and eternal damnation.

I cannot consent to have equal veneration and affection for the traditions of the church, as to the written word of God, because I think they are not of equal value and excellency in themselves, and have not equal evidence and proof of their coming from God; and because 'tis a great impeachment of the perfection and sufficiency of the scriptures, to the end for which they were purposely written, to have so large a supplement of unwritten traditions; and because they are perfectly needless, when we have a perfect rule already, and every pretence must be judged of by it, and some of them are in express contradiction, and direct inconsistency with it; and because they are liable to great uncertainty and just suspicion, which have passed thro' so many hands, and so many ages together; and 'tis against all fact and experience for a verbal report of sixteen hundred years standing, to be of equal certainty with a written record, and authentick history; and lastly, because it has been abused to the worst purposes, and made an in-

instrument of introducing the grossest deceit, superstition, and tyranny into the Christian Church.

V.

The *immorality of their doctrine*. Nothing is more contrary to the purity of the Gospel, which is a *doctrine according to godliness*, than their loose and licentious *casuistry*. A plain representation of their common doctrine, drawn out of unexceptionable authors, will shew what methods they have taken to indulge men in their lusts, and at the same time to quiet their consciences. No doctrine is more fully taught in scripture, than the *love of God* with all our heart, as fundamental and comprehensive of all religion; yet the Church of *Rome* propagates doctrines, which entirely cancel the obligation to it. Habitual love to God is not necessary in the judgment of *Bellarmino*, when he saith, *Certainly God hath not commanded, that we should love him from an infused habit; for laws are not given concerning habits, but acts* *. *Melchior Canus*, a noted *Dominican*, expressly declares, *That there is no affirmative precept for habitual love to God* †. It is agreed among them, that all means necessary to salvation are commanded; and therefore since this is not commanded as a *duty*, it is not necessary as a *means*.

But, perhaps, by some subtilties they may hope to obscure this doctrine, and render it less shocking; let us therefore enquire what their doctrine is as to *actual* love. Here some expressly say, that the command to love God, is not obliging, and so make it none. Thus *Stapleton*, a man of character in his time, *The precept of loving God with all*
C 3 *our*

* De grat. & lib. arbit. l. 6. c. 7. p. 664.

† Part IV. Prelect.

mind is doctrinal, and not binding others *. Others think we are obliged to love him ; but are not agreed about the *time*, when we are obliged to put forth this act of love. Not after *sin*, nor on the receipt of *blessings* ; not on the days of solemn *worship*, nor in any part of it ; but some of them think it may be requisite once in *five* years, and give this reason for it ; because the *time of loving God is not determined, but left to the judgment of the wise ; and thus wise divines have thought* †. There were many in the time of the Council of *Trent*, who held it sufficient, to love God actually but *once in a life-time* ; and as for that single act, they leave us at liberty, so that it be but *before we die*, and in the *lowest degree*.

But it may be said, these are the doctrines of particular men, for which the church is no way accountable. But the Council of *Trent* hath determined, That *attrition with the sacrament of penance, will excuse any man from any sin* ; and so from the want of actual love to God, *whether living or dying*. So that if a man at the point of death, who never loved God all his days, should ask his confessor, whether it was necessary he should love him now ; the answer must be, that according to the Council of *Trent*, it was needless ; for that attrition with the sacrament of penance is sufficient to bring any into a state of grace and salvation.

This *attrition*, on which so much is made to depend, is described as the *lowest degree* of sorrow, arising from a view of sin, as it is disagreeable to reason, or from fear of hell, or dread of temporal punishment ; as loss of health, credit, estate, even
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* De Justif. l. 6.

† Petr. a Sidos. Sum. de 1. Precept. 4.

such as was in *Judas* *. Upon this the Council says, that the sinner *makes his way to righteousness*; and altho' without the sacrament of penance, attrition cannot by itself bring a sinner to justification, yet it *disposeth* him to obtain the grace of God in that sacrament. *Bellarmino* quotes this, justifying the received opinion of divines, " That attrition arising out of fear, is a disposition to justification, and the sacrament being added, doth truly justify †." What doctrines can be more immoral than teaching, that tho' Christians neglect the great duties of religion, and live in acts of wickedness directly contrary to it, yet that they may be saved by a device of the church's own invention? All sins are hereby made *safe*, all duties *needless*. A man may live in the practice of wickedness, and yet be saved.

Nothing is more plain from the light of nature and revelation, than that God is to be *worshipped* in a manner worthy of himself, and suitably to his nature: *God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and Truth*. But the doctrines of the *Papists* make it needless to worship God with any act of the *mind* or *will*, or, as they call it, *attention* or *intention*. They neither need to mind *God* in their service, nor the *matter*, nor the *sense*, nor the *words*. A *purpose* to do it is enough, tho' it be not performed: This is the doctrine of *Aquinas*, whom the rest commonly follow. " Attention is not necessary all the while, but the virtue of the first intention with which a man comes to pray-er, renders the whole prayer meritorious ‡." Attention is of three sorts; to the *words*, so as not
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* Sess. XIV. c. 4.

† De Penit. p. 972.

‡ So *Suarez* quotes lib. 3. de Orat. Vocal. 5.

to err in pronouncing them; to the *sense* of the words; to the *object* prayed to; *Bellarmino* expressly asserts, "That any of these is sufficient, " even the first, tho' it is of least importance *." If this is true, then it is not needful to worship God, or to intend it. It is not required that you should either mind the *thing* prayed for, or the *God* you pray to, or the *sense* of the words you pronounce: It will be sufficient if you do not err in pronouncing them. *Sylvester*, master of the sacred apostolical palace, and a great champion against *Luther*, in his book dedicated to *Leo* the tenth, expressly declares, "That to pray with attention in " their canonical hours, is not required by God's " law, and that attention is not under the precept †."

No attention or devotion of mind, no reverence of God or sincerity of intention is necessary. The heart may be afar off, while they do something *before* and *about* God, which they call worship, and they may be accepted tho' they know not what they do, nor mind what they are about. Their confining their worship to an unknown tongue, makes it necessary to teach this doctrine, and unavoidable for the people to worship otherwise. And what sort of people are they, who make the love and worship of God needless, and take the most effectual course that he should have none? Had the first defenders of Christianity talked in this manner of the worship of God, how would *Gelus* and *Julian* have triumphed, and challenged them to produce any philosopher, who treated the subject with so little reverence? They needed not have

* De Bon. Operib. B. v. c. 10. p. 1026.

† Sum. v. hor. n. 13.

have *persecuted*, they might easily have *biffed* such doctrine out of the world.

Whatever tends to encourage *injustice* and *uncharitableness* towards men, must be immoral. The *Papists* who have loosed the bonds we are under to the love and worship of God, have introduced a set of notions which will justify the greatest treachery, perfidy, barbarity and uncharitableness towards their fellow-creatures. To make a *promise without an intention to be obliged, is but a venial crime, if no great hurt be done or intended to others* *. He promises, but does not intend to perform, whilst he labours to persuade others of his fidelity; neither is he bound to it. Such is their regard to *common honesty*. If men should take the liberty this doctrine gives, human society must break up, all confidence in promises and assurances vanish. A man may promise, and not intend to promise, and so *cheat*; or he may deny that he promised, and so *lye*; and swear that he did not, and so *be perjured* innocently †. The worst *perfidiousness* in the world may be excused thro' *ignorance* of the fact, or thro' *forgetfulness*: (If a man forget to be honest, he may be innocently a rogue,) or for *any cause which he thinks reasonable* ‡. Such a one may not only break his word when there is some reasonable cause, but when there is any which *seemeth* so to him. “He who promises, without a mind or intention to oblige himself, is not bound in conscience to perform it ||.” Honest *Heathens* would blush at such decisions, and the world would be reduced to the most wretched condition if they should prevail. There

* Sylvester V. Part 4.

† Navar.

‡ Cajetan Sum. V. perfidia.

|| Lopez, Part II. p. 176.

There is evidence of their practice of this doctrine in the conclave itself. In the vacancies of the See of *Rome*, the Cardinals used to enter into certain mutual promises to reform the papal government, which all swear to perform if they are advanced to the *Popedom*; tho' it appears from all preceeding examples, that he swears with a mind not to keep it; for as soon as he is elected, he declares, that he could not bind himself, and that now he has gained the Papacy, he cannot be bound by others. A remarkable instance of this we have in *Paul IV.* who resolving to break one of the *capitulations* he had sworn to a little before, and some of the Cardinals putting him in mind of his oath, he declared in consistory, that 'tis an article of faith, that the Pope cannot be bound, and much less can bind himself; and to say otherwise is a manifest heresy; and threatened the inquisition to any who should hold it *.

The doctrine of mental *reservation*, so much encouraged, opens a door for all manner of injustice and deceit; and no oath can be contrived in any terms which they do not swallow, and then evade the obligation by some secret *reserve* in the taking it.

Charity towards our fellow-creatures, stands greatly recommended in the Gospel; but is sadly debased, in both its parts, in the Church of *Rome*. *Cajetan* tells us, That the command to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, obliges us not to a love of charity, not to that special love which was always thought to be the duty of Christians, enjoined by their Lord and Master. By the doctrine of *Aquinas*, the precept requires no *special act* of love to our

* Father *Paul's* History of the Council of *Trent*,
B. 1. p. 71. B. 5. p. 396.

our brother ; no formal or internal act at all, nor any external, which will signify more than the *want of hatred*. Others say, there is no *affirmative precept* for the love of our neighbour, no time for it ; it is enough if we do *nothing against him*. Thus the great duty of the law and the prophets, and of the Gospel of Christ, is cut off at once, and we perform it by *doing nothing*, and tho' we neither *will*, nor *do* good to them, provided we do them *no mischief*.

As to the acts of *mercy* in relieving the indigent, it is scarce to be discovered, whether according to their doctrine, there is any necessity for it at all. Cardinal *Cajetan* tells us, to omit those acts of charity is no mortal sin ; but only in two cases. 1. When one hath *superfluity* both in respect of nature and state, more than the nature and quality of the person requires ; the munificence and the magnificence of life, and all events and casualties provided for. 2. When the poor are in *extreme* necessity ; — not in common want only, but what is extraordinary. That is, when it is apparent that they will die for want of necessities, unless we relieve them ; and that not by the party's word, but by the testimony of eye-witnesses, or by moral certainty. Nay, if there is a probability that any other person will relieve the object ready to starve, he may leave him to the mercy of others, without doing any thing himself. Thus while each one exhorts another, the poor may perish, and all be excused. And in the greatest necessity 'tis sufficient to let, or sell, or lend them ; so that if a man were in such extremity for bread, as to sell his son to buy it, no Christian is bound in that case to give him relief freely, but 'tis enough to let him have it for the sale of his child.

Know-

Knowledge and *holiness* are the great ornaments of the human mind, and necessary to the goodness of the heart, and the *seeing God*; but the *Papists* have taken care to secure heaven to their followers without either. The church makes it impossible for the people to attain knowledge, since not only the Protestant versions of the bible, but their own wretched translation, are in the *Index of forbidden books* of *Pius IV.* and 'tis an unpardonable sin for any to read them without a license from a Bishop or Inquisitor. And as if this were too much, in the after edition of *Clement IV.* it is declared, "That all power of granting such licences is taken away*." *Bellarmino* says, "That the greatest part of the faithful scarce apprehend any thing besides the bare sound of the words, and yet are deservedly accounted believers †." They need not know what they are to pray for, or whom they pray to. "The Clergy when they are at divine service, tho' they understand not what they say, yet do not sin ‡." In the *Missal* established by *Pius V.* and *Clement VIII.* every syllable is distinctly marked, to direct the sounding *long* or *short*. They who managed the controversy for the *Papists* at *Ratisbon* 1601, maintained that the people are subject to their teachers; that if they err, the people *may* and *ought* to err with them ||.

According to this scheme, the leaders may carry the people whether they please *without suspicion*, and the people may follow *without danger*. The ignorance of their *teachers* is astonishing. Of the

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* Azor. Just. Mor. Part. I. l. 8. c. 26.

† De Justif. l. 1. c. 7. p. 705.

‡ Jacob. de Graff. p. 291.

|| Hungerus, Volforus.

Bishops who composed the Council of *Trent*,
 “ Very few of them had knowledge in *theology* ;
 “ and not any of them remarkable for learn-
 “ ing *.” These were the persons who were to
 form articles of faith for the Christian Church,
 which all were to be damned who did not believe;
 when they who made them were so ignorant, that
 they knew not what they decreed. The ignorance
 of the *Popes* themselves is freely owned by their own
 writers. Many of them have not gone so far as
 their grammar, and been so ignorant that they
 could not speak their own names in *Latin*. And
 when we are ready to wonder at this, they tell us,
 to stop our mouths, that God did open the mouth
 of *Balaam’s* ass †.

As to *holiness* of heart and life, the *Papists* by
 their unscriptural division of sin into *venial* and
mortal, have made a way to heaven for the most a-
 bandoned wretches. If a man should blaspheme
 God, curse Christ, renounce the faith, murder
 his own father, ravish his mother; yet if he do it
 not with a *perfection of judgment, deliberation* and
consent, it is but a small fault. He may easily
 meet with many things which will take off this
 guilt; ignorance, drowsiness, inconsiderateness,
 disorder by drink, negligence, forgetfulness, pre-
 cipitancy, levity, passion, customs, habit, will
 serve to excuse any wickedness from mortal guilt.
 How needless is holiness in that church, since they
 may not only neglect acts of piety, righteousness
 and common honesty, but live in practices oppo-
 site and inconsistent with them! Their doctrine
 gives encouragement to live in them without *con-*
science, and die in them without *repentance*.

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* Paul. Hist. p. 163.

† Platin. de vitis Pap. Bosius de sign. L. XVI. c. 9.

Their best Authors teach that these “ venial
 “ sins may consist with the love of God, and do not
 “ impair the habit of charity *.” These sins are
 not *against* the law, but *besides* it. And “ all the
 “ venial sins in the world, if they met toge-
 “ ther in one man, would not amount to so much
 “ as one damning sin †:” And “ God would be
 “ unjust if he should punish any for them ‡.” A
 man may “ die with resolution to continue in
 “ venial sin, if he should live; and breathe out his
 “ soul with complacency in those sins, and yet be
 “ saved ||.”

To conclude, The *decretals*, which are the law of
 the church, and over-rule all other laws, natu-
 ral, divine and civil, deprive *hereticks* imme-
 diately of all due fidelity, right, duty and observ-
 ance, which any whoever do owe them. Nay,
 they allow any man to *kill* them without danger of
 murder. *Baronius* tells us **, that *Urban II.* de-
 clared, “ That they are not guilty of murder who
 “ kill any who are excommunicated ††,” and
 commends him. Now all hereticks are excom-
 municate by the Council of *Lateran*, under *In-*
nocent II. And this sentence is denounced in a so-
 lemn manner, once a year, by the Pope; particu-
 larly against us here in *England*: of which Car-
 dinal *Barbarini* thought fit to give special notice
 to the *Irish*, in the reign of King *Charles II.* How
 much are we beholden to them, that we are per-
 mitted to live?

Thus

* Bellarm. de Amiff. gratiæ. p. 91.

† De Instit. L. IV.

‡ De Amiff. p. 91.

|| De Purg. p. 1395 — 1370.

** De Grat Gloss. L. II. c. 4.

†† Annal. 1881.

Thus a man, according to their principles, may be holy enough to go to heaven, who in the account of sober *heathens*, would be esteemed a *monster*. If a man had a mind to render the Christian name odious to the sober part of the world, and make men believe that Christ was the *minister of sin*, and the Gospel designed to debauch mankind; let him only persuade them that the maxims of the *Papists* are agreeable to the doctrine of Christ. But they may as easily prove light to be darkness, and the *Alcoran* to be the Gospel, as to prove a conformity between their impure scheme, and the plain declarations of the Gospel of *Jesus*.

VI.

The absurdity of Transubstantiation. A considerable prejudice against *Papery*, and what would be alone a sufficient reason for being a *Protestant*, is their doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; which is grounded upon the literal sense of the words of the institution, *This is my body*; which they construe to this sense*: *That the whole substance of bread is turned into the body of Christ*; and the *whole substance of wine into his blood*: so that there is no more *bread and wine*, but only the *accidents* of them remaining; it becomes the real natural body of Christ, the same in which he suffered upon the cross, and which is now glorified in heaven.

Now this is pretended *without* any sufficient reason, and *against* all the reason in the world. There is no sufficient reason for it; for the words are evidently *figurative*, agreeable to the custom of the *eastern countries*, and our Lord's *usual* manner of expression concerning himself; as, *I am the vine, the door*, &c. which no man ever pre-

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tended

* Concil Trident.

tended to understand in a literal sense, and for which there is the same reason, as for this. There is the highest necessity, and greatest propriety in understanding them in a figurative sense, from the nature of a *sacrament*, as well as of a *parable*; and to understand them otherwise, would make the expression *foreign* to the subject spoken of, and to involve the greatest *absurdity*.

It was particularly agreeable to the *nature* of the action our Lord was now about, who had been just celebrating the *passover* with his disciples, where the eating the paschal lamb was expressly called the *Lord's Passover*, Exod. xii. 2. And the eating bread, and drinking wine, might as fitly signify the *body* and *blood* of Christ; as the eating a lamb, signify the action of the destroying angel *passing over* the houses of the *Israelites*. And there needed no particular explication immediately after the celebration of the passover, where a like expression was constantly used. Besides, that this makes it of a piece with the *other* expressions of the institution, which are allowed to be figurative; as, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood*; which is understood only of signifying, or sealing it, not literally of the thing itself. And surely these words, *This is my body*, may as well be understood in a figurative sense, and *ought* to be so, for the same reason. 'Tis not sufficient in such a case as this, where the literal sense would be so manifestly absurd, to shew that the words *may* be so understood, or are capable of such a sense; but 'tis incumbent upon them to prove, that 'tis a necessary sense, and *must* be so understood, and are not capable of any other sense.

And, especially, still when this sense of the words can only agree to the *design* of the solemnity
to

to which they are applied ; which was to be a *memorial* of the death of Christ, or, *a doing this in remembrance of him*. The Apostles must necessarily have this apprehension of it from the nature of the thing, and the use of their own sacraments, and could never possibly understand it in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, which was a thing never before heard of in the world, unless it had been particularly signified and declared to them to this purpose : “ I mean, this bread, which I now hold in
 “ my hands, is my real natural body, which you
 “ now see before you, and not the memorial, or
 “ signification of it, which you would naturally
 “ be led to think, and which your sacraments
 “ were always understood to be.” And even such a declaration would have been a contradiction to the *natural* revelation of the will of God to the world ; and have done more to destroy the credit of a *positive* revelation, than to prove the truth of any particular doctrine in it.

But besides this, 'tis *contrary* to all reason, and the most manifest *absurdity* : For 'tis contrary to all mens *senses* and experience, to their *seeing, smelling, feeling* ; which are the only means of our knowing sensible things, and by which the understanding perceives them ; and would introduce a necessary unavoidable deceit and *delusion*, by the very constitution of our nature, and by the Author of nature himself.

It destroys the great *evidence* for the truth of *Christianity*, and by which it first prevailed, and has been supported in the world, *viz.* the *miracles* wrought by Christ and the Apostles ; particularly the *resurrection* of Christ from the dead, which is the capital argument, and upon which the greatest stress is laid, in the preaching of the Apostles. For

they are in the nature of them *appeals* to the senses of men, and wholly depend upon the evidence of sense, and without which they could be no proof at all. If our senses, in proper circumstances, may constantly deceive us in one case, we can't be sure they don't in another; and no man can have greater evidence that the *miracles* and *resurrection* of Christ, are true, than he has that transubstantiation is false.

'Tis contrary to the exprefs declarations of *scripture* concerning it, which calls it *bread*, after the consecration or *bleffing*, and frequently represents the whole action, by the *breaking of bread*, Acts ii. 42. xx. 7. And tho' *angels* * are sometimes called *men*, in the scripture, because they had the appearance of men; yet the scripture never says, that they ceased to be angels, and were turned into men: They were really angels in an human shape. And this was not contrary to the judgment of sense, but agreeable to it; for they had really the appearance of men, tho' afterwards it appeared by other circumstances that they were angels. The *communion of the body and blood of Christ* does not relate to his natural body and blood, but *expresly* to the *bread* and *wine*, which are the symbols of it, and the spiritual benefits by them: And being *guilty of his body and blood*, and *not discerning it*, signifies an indignity offered to him, by a disregard to them; as the stabbing the *picture*, or dismembring the *statue* of the king, is construed an high affront, and disrespect to him. The *sixth* chapter of *John's Gospel*, has no *relation* to the *sacrament* which was not then instituted, but only to his *doctrine* and *death*; and nothing can be inferred from thence to this purpose.

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* Cath. Christ. Instruct.

It destroys the nature of a *sacrament*, which is allowed to be a visible sensible *sign*, and signification of an invisible *spiritual* blessing, and not the very thing itself; as baptism signified the *remission of sins* to the truly penitent, but was not the remission itself. It makes the *memorial* of the death of Christ, to be the *thing* itself; and what was appointed to be a *remembrance* of him, which supposes him *absent*, to contain his real bodily *presence*; against his express assertion to the disciples, that when he went to the Father, *they should see him no more*, John xvi. 16. and that of the Apostle, *tho' we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more*, 1 Cor. v. 16. Tho' the remembrance of a thing in a larger sense, may be considered as standing opposed to *forgetting* it; as when we are required to *remember our Creator* *, i. e. to study and attend to his will; yet when it is properly used, it is opposed to the *presence* of the thing, as in all publick memorials of great personages, or great actions; and the remembrance here required, expressly relates to the *body and blood* of Christ, and is called a *shewing forth his death*, which is certainly an action past.

'Tis inconsistent with the nature of a *body*, which is necessarily *circumscribed* in some certain place, and cannot, while it retains the essential dimensions of a body, be in more places than one at once. It absurdly *multiplies* the body of Christ into innumerable bodies at the same time; his glorified body in heaven at the right hand of God, which is his only real body; and his crucified body in numberless places on earth, at the pleasure of a priest, how ignorant and vitious soever,

* Cath. Christ. Instruct.

ever, only by pronouncing the words of the institution; which if it were true, would be a greater miracle than ever was wrought by Christ himself, or by any of his Apostles.

'Tis contrary to the sense of the *Christian Church* for above 600 years, and while it retained any of its primitive purity. For tho' the *antient writers*, sometimes used high *figures* of speech to express their great affection and devotion for this sacred solemnity, yet they never understood it in the sense of Transubstantiation; for they never once used the word, and frequently say many things of it, which are utterly inconsistent with the belief of it *.

Finally, 'Tis a standing *dishonour* to the Christian profession, and an unconquerable *prejudice* in the minds of men against it. It makes Christianity appear absurd and ridiculous in the *Jewish*, the *Mahometan*, and *Pagan* world, and is an effectual bar to their conversion to it. And it has been a bone of *contention* in the *Christian world* ever since it was first started, and has kept up divisions and differences in it, which nothing but power and violence, so contrary to the nature of truth, and the genius of Christianity, has been able to suppress: And it will be an eternal hindrance to reconciliation, and union with the rest of the Christian world, the far greatest part of which have never received it †.

Their doctrine of communicating in *one kind*, which is built upon the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*,

* Let the learned Reader consult *Albertin de Eucharistia*.

† See *Ludolph. Hist. of Ethiopia*; and Mr. *Claude's* Doct. Cath. de Eucha. against Mr. *Arnaud*, and the defence of it by Mr. *Laroq.*

ation, is a direct contradiction to the institution of Christ ; for he says, as expressly, *Drink you all of it, as Take eat, this is my body.* And the one was directed only to the Apostles, as well as the other ; who were considered in that action, not so much as Apostles and Ministers of Christ, as Christians and Disciples ; and it was designed as a standing pattern to the Christian Church for ever after.

The Lord's-Supper is never represented under the notion of a *sacrifice* in the New Testament, which knows no other expiatory sacrifice, but the *one offering* of Christ, and that *offered once for all.* When the Apostle says, *we have an altar,* he is not speaking of the *Lord's-Supper*, to which nothing in the context has any relation ; but of *Christ*, who under the Christian dispensation, is both *sacrifice, priest, and altar* ; and by whom all our services are to be offered up to God. The Lord's-Supper is no otherwise a sacrifice, than in a *spiritual* sense, as alms, and prayers, and praises, are called sacrifices, and is only so represented by the *antient Writers* *.

I observe in all their writings, the last resort is always made to the *Almighty Power of God* ; and the *authority* of the Church and Councils, which looks a little suspicious, and as if there were a defect of reason. Tho' Almighty Power can do every thing, and nothing is *impossible* with God, which is a proper object of power ; yet contradiction and absurdity is no object of power, and inconsistent with the divine perfections ; as 'tis *impossible for God to lie.* 'Tis time enough to talk of the *power* of God against the evidence of *sense and reason*, when it can be made to appear that God has said it,

* See Dr. *Waterland's Charge to the Clergy*,
1737.

it, and that this is the *true* and *necessary* sense of the institution.

The promise of the Spirit was made by Christ to the Apostles *, to secure his doctrine to the Christian Church, and preserve it from error; but was not made to Councils in after ages, who had not the same Spirit. Nor have they been able to preserve the church from innumerable errors, any more than the doctrine of the Apostles. The Councils of *Lateran*, *Constance*, in the darker ages of the Christian world, who made the first attempts to bring it in; and that of *Trent*, which first established *Transubstantiation*, were packed and managed by infinite intrigues of the court of *Rome*; against the sense of many of the most wise and learned among them; and who, after long and great opposition, were over-ruled and born down by power at last †.

I shall conclude with observing, That *Aureolus*, one of the subtlest of the schoolmen, and several of their principal writers, have declared, "That they should not have thought themselves obliged to believe the doctrine of transubstantiation, if the church had not determined it." And the great cardinal *Perron*, who writ voluminously in the defence of it, declared in his last sickness, "That it was a *monster*; and that he had done the utmost which his wit and parts had enabled him, to colour over this abuse, and render it plausible: like those who employ all their force

" to

* Cath. Christ. Inst.

† See *Le Enfant's History of the Council of Constance*, and *Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent*; and the *Original Letters*, published by Dr. *Gedds*.

“ to defend an ill cause*.” I think I may safely conclude with the lively and forceable words of a great Author, “ That transubstantiation is a millstone about the neck of popery, which sooner or later will sink it to the bottom of the sea : and that it is an absurdity of that monstrous and massy weight, that no human authority, or wit, are able to support it. It will make the pillars of St. *Peter's* crack, and requires more volumes to make it good than will fill the *Vatican* †.”

VII.

Their worship in an unknown tongue. Their ordinary worship of prayers and praise is in the *Latin tongue*, a language which the greatest part of Christians are strangers to, and is no where universally understood. So the Council of *Trent* has decreed, and their practice is agreeable to it ‡. But this I can by no means consent to on the following accounts.

It seems to me to be contrary to *reason*, and inconsistent with the nature and end of divine *worship*. The worship of God is a solemn thing, and therefore surely, when I am engaged in it, I ought to know what I am doing, and be able to join with him who officiates. But I see not how I am capable of doing this, if I understand not the language which is used. I apprehend therefore that such worship, if it may in any proper sense be called worship, can neither be fit for me to offer,

* Drelincourt Reponse a Lettres de Monsig. le Prince Ernest aux cinq Ministres de Paris, Geneve, 1664.

† A. B. Tillotson's Discourse against Transubstantiation. Vol. III. 8vo.

†† Sess. 22. c. 8, 9.

offer, nor for God to accept. It is said, that
 “ tho’ men understand not the *Latin tongue*, yet
 “ this is no prejudice, since they are sufficiently
 “ instructed by their Manuals, and prayer books,
 “ how to accompany the priests, with prayers and
 “ devotions adapted to every part of the mass *.”
 Methinks this is in effect to own, that they ought
 to understand what is done; and if so, I apprehend
 it would be a much nearer and safer way to
 let them have their publick devotions in their native
 language, than to send them to books of devotion
 to direct their conduct in it.

Besides, the worship of God in an unknown
 tongue is plainly *condemned* by St. Paul, throughout
 1 Cor. xiv. and therefore the church of Rome is
 much in the wrong to oblige men to it. It is said
 with an air of assurance, “ That the apostle has
 “ not one word in that whole chapter, of the
 “ liturgy of the church; but only reprehends the
 “ abuse of the gift of tongues among the *Corin-*
 “ *thians*, who, out of ostentation, affected to
 “ make exhortations, or extemporary prayers, in
 “ their assemblies, in languages utterly unknown,
 “ and which, for want of an interpreter, could
 “ be of no edification to the rest of the faithful.”
 And therefore since their exhortations and sermons
 are made in the vulgar language, they think that
 what the Apostle has said does not at all affect
 them. But this by no means weakens the force of
 the Apostle’s reasoning. I acknowledge that the
 Apostle says nothing in this chapter of the *liturgy*
 of the church, understanding the word in the pre-
 sent common sense of it; and there was this good
 reason

* Cath. Christ. Instruct.

reason for it, that at that time they had no such thing in the church.*

But he is all along speaking of the publick worship of God, in which the whole assembly was to join, and to express their consent and concurrence to what was spoken, by saying *Amen* to it. And as he directs that the whole of the service should be done to *edifying*, v. 26. so as a necessary means of it, it must be performed in a language understood by all who were present. I think all the reasons which the Apostle urges, against uttering their inspired prayers in a language not commonly understood, unless it was interpreted, are equally strong against the use of it in a stated liturgy; for there is as much reason why men should understand what they are doing, when employed in the worship of God now, as there could be then. So that tho' their exhortations and sermons are in the vulgar tongue, yet since their stated liturgy is in a language not understood, they so far plainly fall under the censure of the Apostle.

Further still, I see not how it is possible for me to observe the gospel *directions* concerning the worship of God, when I understand not the language in which it is performed. We are required to

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worship

* This I think may be justly inferred from the silence both of scripture and the earliest writers about this matter; for as one well observes, "It is strange, that if, from the beginning of christianity, there had been stated liturgies, prepared either by Christ or his apostles, for all christian churches, there should be no mention made of them, either in scripture or primitive antiquities." And if there was no such liturgy then in use, it could not well be expected that the apostles should speak of it.

worship him who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth; to draw near with a true heart, to serve him with reverence and godly fear; to pray and sing with understanding, and to pray in faith. But it does not appear to me, how any are capable of observing such directions, and expressing such a temper of mind, when they know not the meaning of the words which are used. They may indeed pay an outward reverence, but I see not how they can worship God in spirit, if they do it not with understanding.

It is said in defence of this practice, "That if the people assist at the publick service with attention and devotion, this is all that God and the church expect from them, and that there is no occasion to join with the priest in the prayers he makes use of," and therefore no need of understanding them. But if this is all that the church expects, I fear it is not all that God expects from them. He requires not only that they appear in the publick assembly, but that they join in the several parts of worship, and that they do it with a right frame and temper of mind. And, surely, it would much more tend to promote attention and devotion, to understand the prayers which are offered up, than to be kept in the dark, and left to their private devotions.

Now since from what has been said, the worship of God, in an unknown tongue, appears to me to be unreasonable in it self, to be plainly condemned in scripture, and to render the gospel directions about divine worship impracticable; I am sufficiently convinced, that I ought not to consent to the use of it. Nevertheless I have not been wanting to consider what the church of Rome has to offer in its own defence. "They pretend that
" it

“ it is the antient language of the church, used
 “ in all the sacred offices, even from the Apostle’s
 “ days, in all the *western* parts of the world ; and
 “ therefore the church, which hates *novelty*, de-
 “ sires to celebrate her liturgy in the same lan-
 “ guage which the saints have done for so many
 “ ages.” But the truth of the fact may be justly
 called in question, how confidently soever they
 assert it ; and I am well satisfied they would find
 it no easy matter to produce sufficient proof of it.
 But if it was used in the *western*, it was not so in
 other parts of the world, particularly in the
eastern, where the gospel was first preached, and
 had the greatest spread. Whereas had it been of
 such importance as the church of *Rome* pretends,
 I see not why the *eastern* as well as the *western*
 churches should not have been obliged to it.

Besides, if it was antiently used in the *western*
 churches, it was when that language was in *com-
 mon use* among them, and universally understood ;
 and that can be no reason why it should be still
 retained and imposed, when it is become a dead
 language, and but little understood. Nor is this
 in imitation of *antiquity*, but in plain contra-
 diction to it.

They further plead, that their *Latin* service is
 appointed “ for a greater uniformity in the pub-
 “ lick worship, that so a christian, in whatsoever
 “ country he chances to be in, may still find the
 “ liturgy performed in such a manner, and in the
 “ same language, to which he is accustomed at
 “ home. They add, that *Latin* is certainly, of all
 “ other languages, the most proper for this, as being
 “ the most universally studied and known.” But
 I see no necessity of such an *uniformity* in the pub-
 lick worship, but am persuaded it may be ac-

ceptably performed, if it is done with a right frame and temper of mind, tho' in different places, somewhat different forms and customs should be used in the celebration of it. But suppose it were of greater importance than it really is, yet I see no reason why it may not be sufficiently supported, by allowing men to have their publick offices in the vulgar, rather than in the *Latin* tongue; for worship would be uniformly celebrated, supposing the same forms were retained, tho' in different countries, different languages should be used in it. And I find this has been allowed and decreed in one of their general Councils: The 4th of Lateran, c. 9.

It is further urged, " That by this means a christian, in whatsoever country he chances to be, may still find the liturgy performed in such a manner, and in the same language, to which he is accustomed at home." But this is trifling. The advantage to a few who travel abroad, would bear no proportion to the disadvantage that far greater numbers must suffer at home. It would surely be much better that *they* should want this convenience, if it be one, than that whole nations and countries, for the sake of it, should be always obliged to worship God, in a language they do not understand. And when it is said, " That *Latin* is a language most universally studied and known," I question the truth of the fact in the present age, and in these parts of the world. But tho' it should be allowed, yet it is only among the *learned*; and there is no nation upon earth in which it is studied and known by the common people. And as it is a language understood by few, I think it is very improper it should be any where

where used, and much more that the use of it should be every where imposed.

There is yet another reason urged in their defence, " That it is to avoid the changes to which
 " all vulgar languages, as we find by experience,
 " are daily exposed ; for the church is unwilling
 " to be chopping and changing her liturgy at
 " every turn of language." But surely the inconvenience they are afraid of is very small and inconsiderable, in comparison of the damage done to multitudes, by obliging them to worship in an unknown tongue. Where would be the harm, if once in a century they were obliged to alter a few words, that might be grown out of use ? And would it not be much better, that men should be allowed to worship in their native language, tho' in a course of many years there might be some small alteration in it, than always to do it in a language they know nothing of. Besides, whence is it they are so much afraid of the changes to which vulgar languages are subject ? Surely it cannot be, that by this means their liturgy might become *unintelligible* ; for that would be to give up their whole cause, and to allow that it ought to be understood by those that use it. But it seems the church is " unwilling to be chopping and changing her liturgy upon every turn of language." Is the liturgy changed by altering a few words in a century, and rendering it more easily intelligible ? And rather than a single word of it should be changed, which, I suppose, they think a reproach to it, will they have it in a language which few understand, and are made incapable of attending upon it in a right manner, or with any advantage ? Shall a superstitious regard to their liturgy, contrary to all the laws of reason, scripture, and edification,

cation, render the worship of God, in the principal part of it, utterly useless, to the generality, and ridiculous in the eyes of the impartial world?

VIII.

The idolatry of their worship. Worship is homage and respect paid to any being, whether civil or religious. Supreme religious worship is proper to God the supreme being, and founded in the infinite perfection of his nature, and his essential relations to his creatures; and so we are *to worship the Lord our God, and him only to serve.* And the *jealous God* will not give his glory to another; and to give it to any other, is the highest species of idolatry. And any instance and degree of religious worship, without a divine appointment, is a proportionable degree of idolatry. This is the idolatry charged upon the *Jewish* and Gentile world; the worshipping something in the stead, or besides the true God; or the worshipping him by the mediation of idols, and false gods. This is the highest crime in religion, and the grossest corruption of worship; the most directly opposite to the gospel of Christ, and which excludes from the kingdom of heaven.

Upon these principles, I think the church of *Rome* justly chargeable with idolatry, in their adoration of the *host*; invocation of *angels* and *saints*; in bowing down to *images*; and veneration of *relics*.

Concerning the adoration of the *host*, the Council of *Trent* has decreed, "That there is no
" room left to doubt, but that all faithful
" christians should give to this most holy sacra-
" ment the highest degree of religious worship,
" (latræ

“*latrinæ cultum*) which is due to the true
 “ God *.” Now ’tis well known, that under
 the term *sacrament* they mean the body of Christ,
 under the elements of bread and wine, or at least the
 accidents of them ; it follows that by command-
 ing to adore the sacrament, they oblige to the ado-
 ration of bread and wine, as Christ’s body. And
 tho’ they pretend this “ honour is not paid to the
 “ outward veil, or the sacramental signs ; but to Je-
 “ *sus Christ* who lies hidden there ; ” this is a mere
 pretence, for they always distinguish the sacra-
 ment from Christ ; and the canon asserts, “ That
 “ *Christ is present* in that sacrament ; which is to be
 “ adored *latiræ culto*” But that which is present
 in any thing, cannot be the same with that thing
 in which it is present ; and consequently some-
 thing is here worshipped besides Christ. ’Tis evi-
 dent in the nature of the thing, and acknowledg-
 ed by some of their best writers, that if tran-
 substantiation cannot be proved, they are guilty of
 idolatry in the highest kind of it ; that is, if the
 greatest absurdity can’t be made to appear a cer-
 tain truth, and which I think is certainly false,
 and cannot possibly be true. I cannot, therefore,
 but think them guilty of gross idolatry, whatever
 indulgence may be shewn, by the mercy of God,
 to invincible ignorance and prejudice of mind.

Concerning the invocation of *angels* and *saints*,
 the Council has determined, “ That ’tis good to
 “ invoke the saints with great humility, and to
 “ fly to their prayers and assistance, for the ob-
 “ taining blessings from God.” And all Bishops,
 and men in holy orders, are directed to teach,
 “ That the saints reigning with Christ, do offer
 “ up their prayers to God for men.” And to
 take

* Synd. Trid. Sess. 13. c. 5.

take off all manner of suspicion, that this is only thought *good* and *profitable*, but not rigourously insisted upon; it is declared, that this is a *decree* of the Council, and every one who dare to think or teach otherwise, is pronounced *accursed*. This is also idolatry; for it is making use of other mediators, than the *one mediator* between God and men, without any ground, and in direct opposition to the scripture; for the Apostle makes the *worshipping of angels*, a virtual renouncing the mediation of Christ, and not *holding the head*, Colloss. ii. 19. And it was directly refused and forbid by the angel, when St. *John fell down to worship before his feet*; See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant: *worship God*, Rev. xxii. 9.

They have several evasions to excuse this practice. “ They say they do not address to angels “ and saints, as the *authors* of blessings; but only “ in a way of desiring them to pray to God for “ us *.” But this is not only a false, but an impudent pretension, when all their books of devotion, and the constant practice of their people, witness the contrary. They pray directly to angels and saints for their help and protection; and bestow blasphemous titles upon them, as the authors of blessings, and ascribe the glory to them. The Virgin *Mary*, particularly, is invoked and adored, in the most infamous manner †.

To

* Cath. Christ. Instruct. p. 224.

† As queen of heaven, hope of the world, mother of mercy, author of salvation, the inexhaustible fountain of all good: Without her there can be no pardon, and all God’s favours to men pass thro’ her hands: And most remarkably, upon the Virgin’s account, God is more obliged to man than men are to God. *Barnard Senensf. Sermon. 61.*

To wipe off this reproach, they tell us, "That tho' some of their prayers may appear to imply more than begging the saints to pray for them, yet they really mean nothing more." But this is despicable trifling. Why don't the church which boasts of being *infallible*, take care that the prayers she authorizes should be intelligible and consistent, and the words and sense better agree together?

Nor is it less surprising to hear them vindicating their practice, by saying, "That they have the same reason to desire the saints and angels in heaven to pray for them, as they have to desire the prayers of God's servants here on earth." But who sees not the difference of the two cases. Are we sure they know our wants, and hear our prayers? Have we any warrant or example of it in the scripture? When we are required to pray for one another; and the Apostle often desires the prayers of the faithful in all his epistles. Besides the *Council* itself did not think the cases alike, for they assign a different reason for it, and set it upon another foot, *viz.* Upon *the saints reigning with Christ*; which would have no force in it, upon supposition that praying to them, was not different from a civil asking a favour of a friend, or recommending myself to his prayers.

The *antiquity* of this doctrine is vigorously pleaded in its favour. But I don't find that this practice is so antient as they pretend, or that there was any thing looking this way in the Christian Church, till towards the end of the fourth century, nor any thing of this nature established till the second Council of *Nice*, as low down as the year 787; and this was condemned seventeen years after, by another Council held at *Frankfort* *.

fort *. And all that can be inferred from it, is only this, that in former ages of the church, some men thought it right to pray to angels and saints: but I know no obligation upon me to be of the same mind, who acknowledge *Christ* only as my infallible guide, and the *Gospel* of *Christ* as the only standard of Christian orthodoxy.

The Council of *Trent*, has further appointed the use of *images*, and ordered them to be “ placed in churches, and that due honour and veneration be given to them.” And as this Council has confirmed the decrees of the second Council of *Nice*, it consequently establishes the *adoration of images*, which was an express decree of that Council, under the pain of *anathematizing*. This is the doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, and the practice of its votaries. They represent the sacred *Trinity* by images, and then bow down and worship before them; which is as point blank contrary to the second commandment, as murder is to the sixth; and as truly idolatrous as the *heathen* worship was, and can only be excused the same way. The images of angels and saints are set up in their churches by publick authority; the people prostrate themselves before them, and direct their prayers to them. And tho’ the *Papists* tell us, “ They are not to believe there is any divinity or power in the images, for which they are to be worshipped †;” yet it is certain they ascribe miracles to them, and offer their vows and thanksgivings,

* ‘Tis with strange confidence, and without any regard to truth, that the Author of *Cath. Christ. Instructed*, insinuates that this has been a practice for 1700 years, p. 233.

† *Cath. Christ. Instruct.* p. 247.

givings, upon the supposition of wonderful cures and deliverances wrought in their favour who have prayed to them. This is surely paying religious honour to the image. And tho' 'tis said, "That this is done for God's sake, and for the relation it has to him;" yet how God can be honoured by breaking his express command, and giving his glory to another; or what relation the image has to him, is not easy to conceive.

In the last place, I instance in the veneration of *relics*. What they are we are informed particularly by a late Author, *viz* *. "The dead bodies or bones of the saints; or whatever other things have belonged to them in this mortal life. These, says he, we keep with a religious respect and veneration, for the sake of those to whom they have belonged; but principally for the sake of him to whom the saints themselves belonged; *i. e.* for the greater glory of God." And among the reasons he gives for it, this is one, "because the bodies and other relics of the saints have been, and daily are, the instruments of the power of God, for the working of innumerable miracles." Let this now be admitted as the doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, in this article; and I may appeal to the conscience of every impartial man, whether the regard paid to these relics, has any foundation in nature or scripture, and is not evidently absurd, superstitious, and idolatrous? Nay, they carry this matter to this ridiculous length, "That whatsoever touched the bodies of the saints, or was touched by them, by vertue of that touch acquires a sacredness."

Upon this score they have no one thing of this kind, in higher honour than the *cross*, on which our Saviour died; the *thorns* which wounded his

sacred

* Cath. Christ. Instruct.

sacred head; and the *nails* which pierced his hands and feet; and by consequence, for the same reason, divine honour should be given to *Judas*, who *betrayed him with a kiss*. But 'tis with this ridiculous difference, that they pay this honour, not only to the true cross upon which our Saviour hung, but to the image of it; but not to the images of the nails and spear, but only to those very individual ones which pierced him.

Besides that most of these relicks are pretended and counterfeit ones; there are more pieces of wood kept and honoured in the *popish* world, as parts of Christ's cross, than would build a house, or make 100 crosses of the same dimensions with that on which he suffered; and more of the Virgin *Mary's* milk, than ever came from the breasts of an hundred women who ever gave suck. I cannot better represent this, than in the words of a celebrated writer of their own *. “ It is certain, says he, that lately too much has been ascribed to the relicks of saints, so that even some good men place the sum of religion in getting relicks, and adorning them with jewels and gold; and by wicked men, a false trust is placed in the *needleless* worship of relicks. And out of covetousness, false relicks are forged, and feigned miracles are published, by which superstition is cherished in the people. Also many are found, who make merchandize of relicks, whether true or false; so that almost every where they are carried about by pedlars, and the vilest of men, and with many lies are recommended to the ignorant common people. If care was taken by bishops and princes, to enquire into this affair, as they ought, it is to be
“ feared

* Consult. Cassand. Art. 20. p. 975.

“ feared, that great and detestable cheats would be
 “ discovered. Since, therefore, the true and known
 “ relicks of the saints are very few, and many
 “ of those which are shewn may be justly suspect-
 “ ed ; and since the frequenting and veneration
 “ of them, does *not serve piety much, and very*
 “ *much serves superstition and gain*; it seems
 “ much more adviseable that no relicks should be
 “ shewn, and that the people should be provoked
 “ to worship the true relicks of the saints ; that is,
 “ to imitate the examples of their piety and vertue,
 “ which are extant in their own writings, or in
 “ the writings of others concerning them.”

Upon all these considerations of the case, I
 think myself obliged to observe the plain and ex-
 press precepts of the Gospel, concerning this mat-
 ter : *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, flee from*
idolatry, 1 Cor. x. 14. and, Little children, keep
yourselves from idols, 1 John v. 21.

IX.

Their cruelty and persecution. The principles
 and spirit of persecution are not by accident only,
 arising from causes foreign to their religion ; not
 from the excesses of particular persons, in the sud-
 den transport of provocation ; not the effect of
 oppression, which *makes a wise man mad*, and a
 good man sometimes do an ill thing ; but the na-
 tural effect of their religion itself, and the genuine
 produce of its doctrines. The religion of popery,
 some part of it at least, is made not only consistent
 with it, but to consist *in* it ; and is not only per-
 mitted as what *may* be done, but commanded, as
 what *must* be done ; and these commands enforced
 by severe penalties on the one hand, and great
 rewards on the other.

Are not the decrees of councils part of their
 religion, and binding upon the consciences of their
 F votaries ?

votaries? Are not many of their decrees sanguinary, and barbarous in the highest degree? Are they not taught by their doctors, that the decrees of their councils are the sacred oracles of the Holy Ghost, having this sanction at the head of them, *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost, and to us* *? Did not the fifth Council of *Toledo* decree, "That
 " no prince should succeed to the throne of the
 " kingdom, till he had sworn to permit *no man*
 " to live in the kingdom that was not a catho-
 " lick?" Did not the Council of *Lateran*, under Pope *Innocent III.* decree †, "That the secu-
 " lar powers should be admonished, and if need
 " be, compelled to swear that they will endea-
 " vour *bona fide*, and with all their might, to ex-
 " terminate from every part of their dominions,
 " all heretical subjects universally? Are not these
 decrees enforced by dreadful penalties, upon the
 neglect of them; and with great privileges and
 rewards to those who put them in execution? The
 penalties are no less than excommunication,
 deposition, loss of territory in this life, and hell-
 fire in the next. But on the contrary ‡, the pri-
 vileges and rewards of those who labour in this blef-
 sed work, are the release of penances, indulgences
 of the same value with those who go to recover
 the holy land ||. Nay, Pope *Urban VIII.* in his
 bull of 1643, gave to the massacres in *Ireland*,
 " Plenary indulgence and remission of sins to all
 " who had a hand in it; and desiring heartily that
 " all the faithful now in arms, may be partakers
 " of

* Conciliorum decreta sunt Sancti Spiritus oracula.
Stapleton, contr. Edit. *Paris* 1620.

† Caranza Summa Concil. can. 3. cap. 3.

‡ Caranza, p. 404.

|| Concil. Lat. c. 3. This council was fully esta-
 blished by that of *Trent*, and is now in full force at
Rome.

“ of this most precious treasure.” Do not bishops, before they enter upon office, solemnly promise “ to distress and persecute, all those who “ refuse to do homage to the Pope *.” Is not this then a part of their religion? And is there under the cope of heaven, a religion so calculated for spoil and ruin, and general destruction of all *peace on earth, and good-will to men.*

Agreeable to these principles has been their *practice.* These decrees have been fatally put in execution, whenever it has been in their power. We can hardly cast an eye upon a spot of ground in the map of *Europe*, which has not been stained with blood, in consequence of this part of their religion: Or upon an history in any age, since the *man of sin set himself above all that is called God*, without meeting with some bloody *tragedy* acted upon these principles. Hence private assassinations, and consecrated daggers, secret poisoning, plots and conspiracies, tumults and rebellions, general massacres, religious wars and croisadoes; as if under the banner of the cross, those cruel violences were sanctified, which otherwise would be counted the *works of the devil*, which Christ came to *destroy.*

There are infinite degrees of cruelty on this side of cutting of throats, and burning alive. The Apostle speaks of *cruel mockings*; and the Psalmist says, *It was like a sword in my bones, while they said unto me, where is your God?* The plaguing men in their *spiritual courts*, the stripping families by fines and confiscations, in form of law, is as very plunder, as any violence without form. The banishment of poor people from their native country, from their alliances and settlements, where they could make a shift to get a living, though it may be no where else. The miseries of which we

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have

* Pontif. Roman. 1695. sub Clement VIII.

have been witnesses of in the distressed condition of the poor *French refugees* ; the *exiles* of the principality of *Orange* ; the *Palatines* heretofore ; and now lately the half-starved *Saltzburghers* *, driven from their native country in the depth of winter, without apparel to cover them, without provision for their journey, or even leave to carry off their effects, without bread for several days, in the midst of the cries of poor famished children, many of which perished, and many were half-starved, both men and women ; as if their expulsion was contrived in such a manner on purpose. † 'Tis wonderful with what an undaunted courage, this great multitude, to the number of 30,000, did quit their home and their all, and *went out, not knowing whether they went*. When a body of dragoons was let loose upon the poor Protestants of *Orange*, guilty only of having the Prince of *Orange* for sovereign, and protestantism for their religion, to make a shew of some mixture of mercy, they published, that the people might have liberty to *sell* what they had ; but at the same time took care that no body should *buy* : for it was infused into the people by the clergy, that it would be a *mortal sin*, to furnish them with any encouragement to go where they might live and die in their heresy ‡.

It will not consist with the brevity I must observe, to enlarge upon the cruelties practised upon the poor *Albigenses* **, under Pope *Innocent III.* and *Julian II.* when 200000 of them were destroyed in the space of a few months ; nor on the cruelties of the *Holy Inquisition*, which according to
Vegerius

* *Serious Call* to the city of *London*, 1732.

† *Further Account* of the sufferings of the persecuted Protestants of *Saltzburgh*, 1733.

‡ Bishop *Burnet's* sermon upon that occasion, 1704.

** *Clarkson's Practical Divinity*, p. 206.

Vegerins †, in less than thirty years destroyed 150,000, by all manner of tortures. I must also pass by the burnings in *Queen Mary's* days, when the popish bishops very gravely deliver'd men to be tied to a stake, and burnt alive, who were better than themselves ‡; besides the discipline of whips and tortures, in which *Bonner* was so well skilled. The *Gun-powder Treason* to destroy King, Lords and Commons, at a blow. — The *massacre* at *Paris* ||, which began the general slaughter of the Protestants all over the kingdom, to the number of about 100,000. The *Irish massacre*, wherein about 200,000 perished, in all the circumstances of cruelty which popery only could inspire. These I barely mention, because they are known thro' the whole world. I shall only add one circumstance with relation to the last; for the facilitating the work, and stirring up the people with greater animosity and cruelty, to put it on at the time prefixed; they loudly in all places, declaimed against the Protestants, telling the people that they were *hereticks*, and not to be *suffered to live any longer among them*; that it was no more sin to kill an *Englishman*, than to kill a *dog*; and that it was a most mortal and unpardonable sin, to *relieve or protect any of them* *.

The dreadful persecution of the poor Protestants in *France* under *Lewis XIV.* should come next under consideration; the cruelties in *Hungary*, *Bohemia*, the *Palatinate*, *Thorn*, and *Salzburg*, should have their place; but I think I have said enough, to evince that the religion of popery is a religion of cruelty, in its principles, obligations, spirit and practice. This is the religion that some

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people

† Limbroch's *History of the Inquisition*.

‡ Burnet's *Abridg.* p. 321.

|| Mazeray, Thuanus.

* Sir John Temple's *History of the Irish Rebellion*.

people are so fond of, that whole nations must be destroyed to introduce it. The religion of Popes and Priests, not of Christ and his Apostles ; the religion of Cabals and Councils, not of the New Testament : A religion which under the pretence of the other world, engrosses the riches and honours of this world to itself, by all the methods of fraud and cruelty : A religion calculated to suppress the most tender motions of natural compassion, and christian love : A religion of a spirit and temper, as opposite to that of christianity, as pride and haughtiness are to humility, as fierceness and cruelty are to meekness and benevolence, or as darkness is to light.

I am free to allow, that some *Papists* have appeared to have good nature and humanity. *Owen O Connolly*, a mere *Irish Papist*, was the man who discovered the design upon the city and castle of *Dublin*. The horror he conceived at so many designed barbarities, was too strong for the dictates of his religion, the decrees of Councils, and Pope's bulls. He broke thro' all to shew mercy, and nature prevailed against principle. But, however, popery taught him quite another conduct ; and the discovery was contrary to the sanctions and maxims of his religion. He was so much the worse *Papist*, by how much the more like a *Christian* he acted. There have been instances of good nature, which even popery itself has not been able utterly to extinguish : But what credit is that to the religion of popery, which is so adapted to make good natures become cruel, and cruel natures to become devils incarnate ?

I shall conclude this article with the words of an eminent Prelate before the Parliament of *Ireland* :
 " We may venture to pronounce, what the *Papists* themselves should have the candour and ingenuity to own, that popery is both an inhu-
 " man

“ man and cruel religion ; for that religion must
 “ ever be so, which obliges the professors of it to
 “ kill people for God’s service, and consecrate the
 “ most shameful villanies under the specious name
 “ of catholick zeal, for the extirpation of here-
 “ ticks *.”

X.

The hazard of salvation in the Church of Rome.
 Salvation and damnation are such important and tremendous words, as should by no means be promised or pronounced, without a plain and sufficient warrant. One would think, the christian world should have been long agreed, that the only warrant a sinner can have to expect eternal salvation, or to hope to escape eternal damnation, is the Gospel of Christ, the fountain of sacred light and truth, where the terms of salvation are stated, the means of it offered, and the way pointed out in which it may certainly be attained ; and where we learn what are those dangerous and hurtful things, which will probably, or certainly, procure eternal damnation. Now by the making the best use of my reason, and of the sacred writings, I think, I plainly see that *Papists*, as such, run a great risk of their eternal salvation, on account of the errors and corruptions of their communion. If confidence and vain-glorious boasting would be any security, I confess they would be out of danger ; but that only aggravates their guilt, and increases the danger.

If *knowledge* is necessary to salvation, as the scripture expressly teaches, for that the *heart be without knowledge is not good*, and the *people perish for lack of knowledge* ; and there can be no faith or love, or fear or hope of an unknown object, as the reason of mankind plainly teaches : then it must be very criminal and dangerous in the church
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* Bishop of *Dromore*’s Sermon, Oct. 23, 1733.

of *Rome*, to cherish ignorance in the people, and keep the means of knowledge out of their hands; and to define *faith rather by ignorance than by knowledge*; and to oblige the people in matters of faith to see, not with their own eyes, but with the eyes of their superiors.

The Gospel requires the *love* of God above all things, and with the *whole heart*, as the highest homage of a reasonable soul, an essential character of a true christian, and the great principle of all obedience. But they make *habitual* love unnecessary, and what falls not under any precept; and that *attrition*, or some remorse for sin, from the slavish fear of punishment, is sufficient to excuse any man, from *actually* loving God, living and dying.

Faith is necessary to justification; faith in God and in the mediator, and in the promises of the new covenant, *i. e.* a hearty embracing the doctrine of the Gospel, and an answerable subjection of soul to it. But tho' the Church of *Rome* * does not deny this, yet they plainly construe it away, by turning away mens eyes from God and Christ, to the Pope and the Church, the true and proper objects of their faith. They believe with an *impli-cite* faith, and only as the church believes, and directs them to believe.

Repentance is every where made necessary to forgiveness; that is, not only sorrow or grief for sin, but a *change* of heart and life from sin to God in the prevailing habit and course; or *bringing forth fruit meet for repentance*. But the *Papists* pretend there is no express precept which requires it; that the whole nature of sin is taken away by baptism; that actual sins are all venial, if done without perfect deliberation; and that the least penitence in the latest moment of life, will be sufficient. This destroys all the necessity of vertue and holiness,

■ Vid. Article V.

holiness, which are absolutely necessary to salvation in the nature of things, as well as by the express appointment of the Gospel. So that this makes an essential difference in the standing *terms* of acceptance in the new covenant, and marks out another way to heaven, than that which the Gospel of Christ prescribes.

Besides, the corrupt and idolatrous *worship* of the Church of *Rome*, greatly hazards the salvation of those in her communion. They make *seven* sacraments instead of the two appointed by Christ; and make them necessary to salvation, tho' the *intention* of the priest who administers them, is necessary to the efficacy of them all; which is a bold presumption, in them, and must leave the matter at the utmost uncertainty as to us. The adoration of the host, and worshipping angels and saints, as authors of blessings, or mediators with God, instead of the *one mediator* between God and men; the worship of images, and pictures and relicks, and giving his glory to another, notwithstanding his jealousy of his worship, and express command to the contrary; must nearly affect our acceptance with God, and be highly displeasing to him.

The spirit and *temper* of the church of *Rome*, is quite opposite to that of Christ and his Apostles. Humanity, benevolence, and charity, are made the great characters of Christ's disciples. They are taught humility, meekness, compassion, forbearance, and love, by the precepts of the gospel, and the example of their master. This is the nature and genius of the christian religion: It breaths nothing but goodness and kindness; and is best calculated to promote friendship among men, the peace of society, and the welfare of the world. But the principles and spirit of Popery are restless, violent, cruel; and naturally lead men to persecute and destroy the most virtuous and pious
who

who are not of their communion, or separate from them *. And tho' I dare not say after all, that a Papist cannot be saved, because I am willing to believe, that those among them who are truly upright and pious, will find mercy with God, and be forgiven their invincible ignorance, and involuntary mistakes: *They will be saved, yet so as by fire*; yet, I think, I may safely say, that no Papist, who acts up to his own religion, and lives in the neglect of duty, and liberties of sin, which the doctrine of his church allows, can possibly be saved, if Christ himself is to be believed, and the gospel is true.

And is this the church which takes upon her to proclaim to all the world, that there is no salvation out of her communion, when there are so many hindrances in the way to it, and it is with so much difficulty that any can be saved in it? Must they be damned who separate from her as departing from the unity and communion of the Catholick church, when, according to the scriptures, faith and love, in which she so notoriously fails, are essential to the being of a church; and the unity of the church of Christ consists in the worship of the one true God, thro' the one mediator, and a regard to the one rule of faith, and worship, and obedience, and being guided and influenced by one spirit of truth, holiness, and love? Let them shew, if they can, how their pretensions are supported upon these grounds.

But there is one argument which must needs
turn

“ * The church of *Rome*, to exalt herself, has made
“ *Europe* a scene of blood and confusion for above 600
“ years; and the most fertile seed-plot of wars,
“ fightings, and tragical contentions, that ever was laid
“ on earth by human ambition; and is the greatest
“ incendiary the world was ever plagued with,” *Geddes's*
Tracts.

turn the tables against us, and infallibly secure them, and endanger us: That is, That Protestants own that a Papist may be saved; but Papists deny that a Protestant can be saved: it is therefore safest to be of that church in which both sides agree, and own salvation is possible. But this is very unnatural, to draw an argument in their favour from their own uncharitableness, and turn our good-nature into a weapon of destruction. It is hard indeed, that because we think some of them may be saved, that therefore we must necessarily all be damned, and none of us can be saved. I am not sure they are in good earnest, when they talk at this rate; perhaps it is only for the sake of the sound and appearance: for confidence is the property of a *quack*, or a mountebank, as modesty is of a skilful *physician*. One would think the charity of Protestants should appear amiable and exemplary, agreeable to the religion and temper of their master. But the Papists abuse us for our charity, and serve their own ends by the most kind and candid concession in their favour.

Is it not insupportable vanity and insolence for the church of *Rome* in effect to say; I set up my self upon the power I assume of cursing and damning all other churches. I will have mens understandings subdued to the belief of my decisions, because I am the least catholick and most uncharitable. You Protestants may fancy candor, generosity, and charity, commendable things, but I make a merit of pride and sensoriousness: You had best look to it, and come into my communion as fast as you can, because I send all who are out of it to the pit of hell. Whether this is an argument fit to convert Protestants, or satisfy sober, reasonable, and considerate Papists, let the world judge. But let them know, that the charity of
Pro-

Protestants, how great soever, can be of little service to them. The most candid and charitable only grant a possibility of salvation, attended with great hazard; and even this goes upon this supposition, that their ignorance is invincible, and consequently can generally respect the common people only; for the guides and learned men among them, who have opportunity and means of discovering their corruption and wickedness, and yet excuse and vindicate them, are out of the reach of charity itself. I conclude this article with the observation of Archbishop Tillotson*, “ Indeed this
 “ argument is very unfitly urged by those who
 “ make use of it. Half the strength of it lies in
 “ this, that we Protestants acknowledge a Papist
 “ may be saved. But why should they lay any
 “ stress upon this? What matters it what we
 “ hereticks say, who are so damnably mistaken
 “ in all other things. Methinks if there were no
 “ other reason, yet, because we say it, it should
 “ seem to them to be unlikely to be true. But I
 “ perceive, when it serves for their purpose, we
 “ have some little credit and authority among ’em.”

HAVING given this larger view of the principal exceptions of the *Protestants* against Popery, I shall now briefly consider some of the principal objections of the *Papists* against the Protestants.

THEY pretend the *invalidity* of their ministry and all their ministrations, as not being derived from St. *Peter*, and conveyed down in an *uninterrupted* succession thro’ all the intermediate ages. To this we answer, That we have all the authority which the *gospel* of Christ can give us, which is the christian charter, and the *statute* law of his kingdom; and which has appointed the christian worship and ministry, described the qualifications of their office, and the way of solemn separation
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* Vol. II. Sermon. III. 8vo.

and investiture into it. It is from the *authority* of Christ the head of the church, and the *charter* of the gospel, that all officers and ordinances receive their being, and derive their success. And an *uninterrupted* succession, in a direct line, from St. *Peter*, cannot be necessary ; for it is impossible to be proved, and is only unreasonably presumed ; because of the uncertain and different accounts of the earliest successors, and the divisions and schisms among his pretended successors in after ages. It would render christianity the most precarious thing in the world, if the whole efficacy of the christian worship was to depend upon so doubtful and uncertain a thing. Nor can there be any need of it, while we have the christian *charter* in our hands ; which, like the charter of a *corporation*, is sufficient to preserve a succession of ministers, to restore it where it is lost, or even to begin it where it never was before. When our Lord says to his disciples, *as the Father has sent me, even so send I you* ; the meaning is, you are to act under the same commission which I received from the father, to be employed in the same business, and with a like authority under me, and encouragement of success. And this commission is contained in the gospel, and is the standing rule and warrant to this day.

THEY further charge us with breaking off from the catholick church and communion, and being *hereticks* and *schismaticks* ; the one an offence against truth, the other against charity.—But these are *theological scarecrows*, and *bruta fulmina*, less terrible and frightful than in former ages. The whole force of the pretence lies in the church of *Rome's* being the *catholick* church, or the whole church of Christ, when she is only one part of it at best, and the most corrupt part of it too. And their pretensions to it are built upon suppositions the most chimerical and absurd.

IN reality the sin and danger of schism is to deny the supremacy of Christ, and forsake the

unity of his church, in faith and obedience to him as the only lord and head of it. They claim a power, not only of binding on the consciences of men laws of their own, with equal authority, and as awful sanctions, as the laws of Christ; but to change and alter his laws as they think fit. It cannot be a damnable sin in us to separate from a doctrine and worship which appear to us unquestionably sinful, and which we cannot believe and comply with, without falsehood and hypocrisy, which are certainly damnable sins. And let any Protestant consider, whether he ought to adhere to the laws of Christ himself, or the usurpations of his pretended vicar against himself, i. e. should *obey God rather than men*. They separate only from the corruptions they had introduced, contrary to the scripture rule, and the first ages of christianity; and were driven from them by their corruptions in doctrine and worship, and sinful terms of communion: And the schism is theirs who are the cause of it, and rendered our separation from them a necessary duty to God. Indeed it is with the least reason and worst grace that the church of *Rome* charges the Protestants with the guilt of schism, who are only a great *faction* in the christian church, and the greatest *schismaticks* in the christian world; for she separates from all other churches whatsoever who are not of her communion, and who are a far better and greater part of the christian world than themselves; as the Greek church, the Christians in *Abyssinia* in the east, and all the Protestants in the western parts of the world.

BESIDES they charge us with *novelty*, and ask, where was your church before *Luther*? The Protestant church was never heard of till 1500 years after Christ.—We answer; The religion which Protestants profess was always where Popery, as distinguished from it, never was; in the holy scriptures, and in the antient church of the first
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three centuries; and among the *Waldenses*, and the *Albigenses*, and great numbers who never submitted to the see of *Rome*, but always protested against its corruptions. The reformation did not begin a new religion, but only restored the old one; and delivered it from the corruptions which Popery gradually, in a long course of time, and in the dark ages of the world, had brought upon it, like the reformation of the *Jewish* church from idolatry, by *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*. The Protestants have only removed the corrupt doctrines and worship by which the Papists had deformed religion, and brought them back to the original rule, and only standard of religion in the christian church. But this no more alters the nature of the thing, than wiping off the soil from a beautiful face, alters the features, or changes the situation of the parts. The first reformers deserved well of the christian world, by a noble stand, and bold defence of truth, tho' we don't pretend they were infallible; and have given a check to the progress of Popery in the world, and obliged to different representations of it. They have softened and qualified some of the grosser points, and construed and expounded away some others, to take off the horror of the appearance, and reconcile the minds of men more easily to it. In reality, Popery itself, as it is a departure from the original records, and antient practice, is justly chargeable with novelty.

In the last place, it is said, It was introduced *irregularly*, by disobedience to civil governments, and disorders in the state.—To which it is sufficient to say, That the religion of Protestants has no principles of *disloyalty* and rebellion, but professes a just *subjection* to civil rulers, of whatsoever profession of religion; which the church of *Rome* cannot pretend to, who avows the deposing princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance to their natural sovereigns, only for not being of their religion,

ligion, and submitting to the decrees of the Pope and the church ; as it was here in *England* in the reign of *Queen Elizabeth*. Nor was the reformation begun in that way, but by the concurrence of princes and states, who were convinced of the errors and corruptions of Popery, and groaned under the tyranny of it. Whatsoever disorders did arise in any places upon that account, were occasioned by the unreasonable opposition and violence of the Papists, who *hated to be reformed* ; which was the case of the *Jewish* church, and of the gospel itself, when first introduced into the world : The Prophets and Apostles were represented as the *troublers of Israel*, and those who *turned the world upside down*. It is no dishonour to the reformation, but a great instance of the wisdom of providence, if in any place the passions and interests of men were over-ruled and made the occasion of so great a publick good.

AND now upon the most serious and impartial view of things, I must solemnly declare, That I can see no reason to forsake the Protestant profession of religion, which is founded upon Christ, the only foundation and head of it ; and the inspired writings, as the only measure and rule of it, and not upon human authority and tradition ; which allows me the right of examining and judging for myself ; where there is purity of doctrine and worship, without their corrupt and idolatrous mixtures ; which has no principles of persecution and violence merely for the sake of religion ; and is, upon all accounts, the safest way to salvation : And I can never think of being reconciled to the church of *Rome*, which I find in every instance, is quite the reverse. I am therefore determined to adhere, by the grace of God, to the Protestant profession in opposition to Popery, because I find the exceptions of the Protestants are well supported, and unanswerable ; and the objections of the Papists against the Protestants are either entirely groundless, or utterly insufficient.

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